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May 13, 2009

Honolulu City Council  
Attn: Budget and Finance Committee

Dear Council Chair Todd Apo, and Budget Chair Nestor Garcia,  
and members of the Committee

We are writing to urge you to RESTORE funding cuts to the budget for the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts (MOCA).

Currently the proposed budget is \$ 172,500 CUT 50% from \$ 345,000. If this budget is allowed to move forward, then important support for arts and culture will be eliminated this year!

The small grants that could be preserved in this effort add so much to the vitality of our city and ALSO leverage other resources, sustain jobs, and help an already stretched education system. Many of these grants are awarded to subsidize community programs, and access to arts learning and engagement for our youth.

Last year 76 groups benefitted from these small grants - spanning a wide diversity of cultures and arts disciplines. Arts and Culture organizations big and small create huge impact for this small investment by filling gaps in our education system, providing engagement for our youth in critically-needed after school programs, AND generate the content that attracts visitors to our islands from around the world.

The economic benefit of this sector is often hard to calculate, but very real. We do know that on a city level, every dollar invested in the granting program has generated a return of investment of three dollars for the cultural economy.

In difficult economic times, cutting in areas that actually GENERATE economic activity seems unwise and short sighted.

We hope the Budget Committee of the Honolulu City Council will agree and support a vision for the future of Honolulu County that sustains a healthy arts sector.

Mahalo,

Marilyn Cristofori  
CEO

Marla Momi Musick  
Communications Director  
State Captain, Arts Advocacy, Americans for the Arts

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